



March 10, 2016

Message from the President & CEO



Richard C. Gentry
President & CEO

I was honored to be part of a distinguished panel of housing experts in Sacramento testifying before the State Senate Transportation and Housing Committee on innovative solutions to build more affordable housing in California.

The committee wanted to hear about a report that the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) released late last year – **Addressing the Housing Affordability Crisis: An Action Plan for San Diego** – that listed 11 ways of reducing housing development costs, such as shortening the permit approval process, deferring development fees, and unlocking underutilized land.

Many of these steps can be taken at the local level at City Hall; however, some require action from State Legislators, such as improving the coordination between the five State agencies that oversee housing and finance, as well as reforming the California Environmental Quality Act to reduce the risk of litigation while maintaining environmental protections.



SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry (center) presenting to the State Senate Transportation and Housing Committee
Sacramento, CA – March 9, 2016

State Senator Benjamin Allen of Redondo Beach, who serves on the committee, held up a copy of the report and said that it includes great ideas, proposals, and thoughts.

"I have to just commend you for this extraordinary report. It is just fantastic. I really do hope that folks get a chance to see it—*Addressing the Housing Affordability Crisis*," Senator Allen said.

Some of our recommendations, including CEQA reform, were also echoed by other speakers at hearing.

Overall, it was very encouraging that at yesterday's hearing, our State Legislators focused (in their own words) on trying to "understand what factors contribute to California's high housing prices and rental costs; discuss what California can do to increase access to and encourage the construction of affordable housing...; and explore innovative land use tools that locals are exploring and already implementing."

[Watch the Committee Hearing \(SDHC CEO testimony begins at 01:23:03\)](#)

[Read SDHC's Memo to the Committee](#)

[Read SDHC's Report – Addressing the Housing Affordability Crisis: An Action Plan for San Diego](#)

City Council Approves The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative

I'm pleased to say that the San Diego City Council on March 1 unanimously approved funding for The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative, SDHC's collaborative effort with the City of San Diego to provide a path off the streets for up to a thousand homeless military Veterans in the city within a year.



The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative – San Diego City Council Meeting
Mayor Kevin Faulconer at podium
March 1, 2016

The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative will invest close to \$12.5 million in Federal, City and SDHC resources to provide housing opportunities for homeless Veterans, including up to \$7 million that the City Council authorized through its unanimous vote: up to \$4 million in City funds resulting from the ground lease of San Diego Square (affordable apartments for low-income seniors) and up to \$3 million from SDHC's pending sale of Hotel Metro (single-room occupancy affordable housing).

The City Council's action also funds the "Housing Our Heroes" landlord outreach incentive campaign, which is one of four program components of The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative.

Landlords with rental properties in the city of San Diego who wish to participate can email HousingOurHeroes@sdhc.org or call 619-578-7768 for more information.

San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and SDHC Chairman of the Board Gary Gramling joined me in speaking to the City Council in support of The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative at the City Council meeting.

City Councilmember Todd Gloria said that getting 1,000 homeless Veterans off the streets would "effectively end Veteran homelessness in our region." Mayor Faulconer said we not only had an opportunity but an obligation "to make sure that the men and women who served our country get the dignity and respect they deserve."

SDHC Chairman of the Board Gramling said The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative "combines housing opportunities with the supportive services that Veterans need to address the circumstances that contributed to their homelessness."

[Read the SDHC News Release](#)

[Read the "Housing Our Heroes" Campaign Fact Sheet](#)

I invite your comments.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Gentry
President & Chief Executive Officer
San Diego Housing Commission

<p>View Previous Email Updates</p>	<p>Watch videos on SDHC's YouTube Channel</p>	<p>Read SDHC's 2014-15 Fiscal Year Annual Report & Activity Updates</p>	<p>Read SDHC's HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO Report</p>	<p>Read SDHC's Creating Affordable Housing Report</p>
------------------------------------	---	---	---	---